

# The Orangeburg News.

FIRST OUR HOMES; THEN OUR STATE; FINALLY THE NATION; THESE CONSTITUTE OUR COUNTRY.

VOLUME 2.

SATURDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 19, 1868.

NUMBER 31

## THE ORANGEBURG NEWS.

PUBLISHED AT ORANGEBURG, S. C.

Every Saturday Morning.

SAMUEL DIBBLE, Editor.

F. C. DIBBLE, Associate Editor.

CHARLES H. HALL, Publisher.

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OF CHESTER.

## SELECTED STORY.

### Stonewall Jackson's Star.

—O—

#### AN INCIDENT OF THE WAR.

—O—

In the fall of 1864, I was detached from

field duty in General Lee's army, and entrusted

to one of the Northern States, requiring great

secrecy and dispatch; but with this, my story

has nothing to do, save as an explanation of

my presence at such a time in the enemy's ter-

ritory. Having reason to remain a few days

in Philadelphia, I was surprised and gratified

to find sympathizers with our great struggle

even in the most radical and loyal city. Care-

fully concealing my position and business there

from my old friends, who so gladly throw open

their doors and hearts for a wanderer so-called

to enter. I enjoyed some pleasant hours in the

society of those who were compelled to speak

with bated breath, but whose hearts throbbled

and eyes kindled at the recital of Southern

wrongs and Southern valor.

Upon descending to breakfast one Octo-

ber morning, my hostess Mrs. B. (a Virginian

herself, but married to a Northern man) met

me, went to her smiles, and holding in her

hand a highly embossed envelope, whose dain-

ty ribbon knot, and beautifully engraved ini-

tial letters, although entirely different from

anything of the kind I had seen for three

years, savored to my mind strongly of mari-

mony. My thoughts went back to the halcyon

days of the past, before heavy cares and dis-

appointments had left their impression on my

heart and brain, and the exposure of camp

life added to the fatigue and privations of the

march, had ploughed long, weary tracks in

my weary bones—the only alleviation by the way,

when in my possession. When I looked down

into eyes that spoke again, and the merry

friends, who joyfully entering the matri-

monial hall, bid me good speed on a like cruise.

The sequel of these thoughts, which flashed

along the wires of memory, issued from my

lips in the single word, "wedding?"

"You are a good guesser," said my fair

friend. "Yes, it is an invitation to the mar-

riage and reception of my lovely little pet,

Missie Norton, whom you met here the other

evening and admired so much. She was born

in the Old Dominion, and clings fondly to

every recollection of our glorious old mother

State. For two years she has devoted herself

exclusively to relieving the necessities of the

Confederate prisoners, and nursing the sick

and wounded in the hospitals here. Listen to

what she says in a note accompanying the in-

itation card:

"Bring your mysterious and agreeable

friend, Mr. W., with you on the 12th; al-

though he will not tell of the nature of his

mission, here, because he has the absurd idea

that a woman cannot keep a secret, yet I know

it is something connected with the welfare of

my beloved South, the land of Jackson and

Lee. His hearty cordial tones and dear old

accent are music to my ear; will you not ask

him to grace my wedding with his presence?"

"I shall be only too happy to accept," said

I; that note falls like balm upon my heart;

none but a dear little Virginia girl could have

written such. I hope the man of her choice

is worthy of the gem he has gained."

"Oh, he is a noble fellow!" returned my

hostess; and the entrance of the breakfast put

an end to the conversation.

The eventful day arrived, and, arrayed in

the regulation dress on such an occasion—a

black immaculate choker and irreproachable

fitting dress—a costume in which I was some-

what puzzled to make my acquaintance, I took

my seat in the carriage beside Mrs. B., and

was rapidly whirled to the scene of enlistment.

We did not attend the ceremony which took

place in the church; therefore upon our arrival

the bride of an hour had already received

the congratulations of her friends upon her ac-

cession to new dignity. Entering the drawing

room, from which the daylight had been care-

fully excluded, my Confederate eyes were com-

pletely dazzled by the splendid array of beau-

ty, fashion and wealth gathered there; and, for

some moments, I imagined that I had been

transported to fairy land. I was, however,

awakened from this trance, by an exclamation

of delight from my companion, and found my-

self standing before an impersonation of grace

and beauty, clad in white satin, orange-blos-

soms, illusions, and a dozen other airy nothings,

with which the fair sex arm themselves to stay

their unassuming victims.

Collecting my scattered senses, I soon settled

down to a "peace basis," and paying my de-

voirs with tolerable composure to the happy

couple, gave place to the eager throng behind

me. Refusing for various reasons, the en-

craticos of my friends to be introduced to sun-

dry daisies of her acquaintance who were

"pretty and so rich," I retired to a corner,

from which observation I became an amused

and interested "looker on in Vienna."

My eye roved over the brilliant scene,

The flashing of jewels, the flutter of laces,

And odors of tropical musk;

Men and women, most beautiful faces,

And eyes of tropical dusk.

mingling with the witching blue of the North-

ern clime, until at last, like a weary bird, it re-

turned to the figure of the bride and rested

there. Something in her quiet, dignified bear-

ing, and happy, trustful face was refreshing

to me, and, almost unconsciously, I scanned

her whole person. What struck me particu-

larly, as I inwardly commented on the tasteful

elegance of her attire (for I am something of

a "connoisseur in such matters") was the ab-

sence of all jewels. Instead of the bridal

pearls, a single highly burnished star caught

at her throat the light fall of lace that covered

her neck and shoulders. My curiosity, for I

plead guilty to the weakness—was aroused to

fathom the origin of a fancy, for wearing such

an ornament on the most eventful day of a

young woman's life, and musing upon it, my

thoughts took another direction. The camp,

the lowering her voice, said: "In this land of

the free and home of the brave, to name one

of the South's great chieftains in tones of

praise is treason; but since you are a true son

of her's, it will venture to relate to you the

story, connected with this precious relic of

Stonewall Jackson and how it came into my

possession."

"Some months ago, while visiting the C.

hospital, my attention was attracted towards

one of the patients who had been brought in

the day before. He was a young man, appar-

ently about twenty years of age, and although

almost wasted to a skeleton, his broad, open

brow, delicate, high-bred nose, and general air

of refinement indicated that he was no mean

lingene. The beautiful, brown eyes, followed

all my motions with such a yearning, beseech-

ing expression that I was irresistibly drawn

to his bedside. Offering him an orange to

cool his parched tongue, and seating myself

beside him, I inquired into his condition.

"Will you bathe my head, as my mother used

to do," said he, "and then talk to me—it is so

long since I have heard a sweet, low voice, like

yours."

Taking out my cologne, I did as he bade

me, talking in an encouraging, hopeful manner

meanwhile, until by degrees he revived a lit-

tle, and told me his history.

"I am a Virginian," said he, and his wan

cheek flushed with pride; "my home is on the

banks of the Shenandoah, and I was one of

the first to answer the bugle note when our

fair Valley was invaded. Jackson was my

leader, and I belong to the Stonewall Brigade.

Although only a humble lieutenant, I had

rather be a private in the noble band than hold

a general's commission in any other corps.

Jackson was my hero; for him I would have

sailed any height, undergone any hardship,

and since his death I have scarcely cared to

live, have by the faithful performance of my

duty to assist in winning fresh laurels for

the brigade he loved so well." He then went on

to tell me he had been taken prisoner six

months before, and accustomed to an open

air, the confinement of a prison had under-

mined his health, and the home sickness and

despair of those detained preyed on his mind

until a slow fever ensued, which was then

draining the strength from his youthful veins.

Of course all this was not told at once, but at

intervals, in answer to my questions. Finally,

fearing the recitation would prove injurious,

I enjoined quiet and rest, bidding him good

bye, with the promise to return the next day.

For a week, at the same time every morning

I attended my "Virginia boy," and my en-

trance was the signal for a brightening of the

sad, hopeless eyes. Sitting by his side, with

his thin hand clasped in mine, he would relate

many little incidents of his campaigns with

Jackson, always dwelling on the famous ex-

ploits of his adored commander, or else pour

forth a tide of recollections of the mountain

home, of the dear old father and mother whose

pride he was, the fair haired sister who so

fondly awaited his return—his horse and a

dog; and a thousand minor details of the sweet

home life so dearly treasured in his heart. But

I shuddered to mark how fast his life was ob-

livering away, and wept at the thought of the

sorrow that would fall with a crushing weight

upon that absent household.

Upon the seventh day I was shocked by the

distressing change which had taken place in

his appearance, that peculiar pallor, and con-

traction of features always the herald of death

having settled upon his countenance. No glad

smiles greeted me as I approached his cot, but

only a faint pressure of the hand as I bent

over him. "Will you not taste this cooling

drink I have prepared for you?" I said.

"No, dear lady," replied he in a faint voice,

and then continued, painfully laboring for

breath, "Save it for someone else; I am dying.

The surgeon would not tell me just now when

I asked him, but I feel the death damp on my

brow. I am not afraid, for I am a soldier, but

it is so hard to die alone, never again to see my

native mountains, and feel the cool air fan my

cheek—never again to hear my father's bless-

ing, or receive my mother's good night kiss.

Will you not do me one more favor—write to

my mother."

I assented, and drawing forth paper pen and

ink, wrote as well as my fast dropping tears

and trembling hand would allow. After mak-

ing of his situation and my kindness, he pre-

ceeded to send affectionate farewells to various

members of his family, not forgetting the ser-

vants whom he mentioned